



# DIOCESE OF Arundel and Brighton

## DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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**School Unique Reference Number:** 114570

<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs S. Clayton
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mr I. Keating
<b>Lead Inspector:</b>	Mrs A. Oddy
<b>Associate Inspector:</b>	Mrs S. Conrad
<b>Inspection date:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> June 2018

Previous Inspection: 2

### Overall Effectiveness

This inspection: 1

<b>Catholic Life:</b>	1
<b>Collective Worship:</b>	1
<b>Religious Education:</b>	1

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school because:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ St Mary's offers a high standard of Catholic education within a warm and welcoming inclusive Christian community. Its Catholic ethos is immediately apparent in its mission statement, the attractive artefacts and displays and the supportive relationships within the school. The learning environment is calm, well organised and beautifully kept. Leaders and managers at all levels are highly effective, conveying a clear vision that is embraced and implemented by an enthusiastic and dedicated staff team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school has a rich and vibrant Catholic life. A wealth of celebrations and activities take place throughout the school year; parents and parishioners are warmly welcomed to many of these. The diversity of the school community is recognised and celebrated, all are welcomed and included in the school's Catholic life. Governors, school leaders and staff are committed to ensuring the wellbeing, personal and spiritual care of each pupil. Pastoral care is excellent. Pupils are exceptionally well behaved. They are courteous and polite to each other and to adults. They are proud of their school and know that they have a personal responsibility to contribute to making it a happy and harmonious place to be.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school offers a wide range of prayer and worship opportunities. These reflect the traditions of the Catholic Church and encourage pupils to develop their relationship with God. Prayer is skilfully woven into the fabric of the school day and is an essential part of school life. The school environment provides opportunity and inspiration, with displays, artefacts and prayer stations inviting the school community to participate in reflection and prayer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The standard of religious education offered by the school is high. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. High quality teaching and learning makes excellent use of cross curricular links and creative activities to enhance provision. Pupils' work is beautifully presented, reflecting their pride in their work. Pupils enjoy religious education and appreciate its importance in the school and to their own lives. Leaders and governors provide excellent monitoring and evaluation of religious education to maintain and develop the school's high standards.</li> </ul>

## **FULL REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school situated in the Brighton Deanery of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by Brighton and Hove Local Authority. The principal parish which the school serves is the parish of Southwick with Portslade. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 53%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to religious education is 10% in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

The school is a one form entry primary school taking pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 206. 11% of pupils have a special educational need or disability (SEND). Of these, 3 pupils have an Education or Health Care Plan (EHCP) or Statement. Pupil premium funding is received for 20% of pupils. This is below the national average. The school serves a very wide and diverse catchment area and has a high proportion of minority ethnic groups, different cultures and faiths. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and the proportion for whom English is an additional language is well above average.

### **WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

- Continue with the school's identified focus to further develop assessment in religious education to facilitate the transition from levels to age related expectations.
- Continue with the school's identified focus to further develop and strengthen parish links.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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### **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because:**

- Pupils are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school and recognise that they have an important part to play. They were involved in developing the school mission statement and appreciate its importance at the heart of their school. Pupil conferencing comments included, "It represents our school to the world," and "It guides us." Pupils interviewed as part of this inspection were able to relate their mission statement to Gospel values and displays around the school.
- The inclusive nature of the school welcomes all pupils and their families, regardless of their faith or cultural background. St Mary's enables all to feel that their faiths and beliefs are valued and respected and that all are part of the St Mary's family. Pupils have a great sense of community and speak enthusiastically of celebrating their diversity in assemblies and special days. A pupil said, "Just because someone is from a different country it doesn't mean you can't be friends with them. We are all together in Jesus' and God's name."
- Pupils are proud of belonging to their school community. They feel happy and safe and know they have a responsibility to care for each other. During this inspection pupil behaviour was excellent both in classrooms and around the school. Pupils are kind and courteous to each other and to adults. They are welcoming and helpful to visitors. A pupil said, "Everyone is really nice here. The teachers are kind." Another wrote, "Friendship is always alive at St Mary's."
- Pupils play a significant part in shaping the Catholic life of the school. Through the Religious Education Council they are able to make regular contributions and suggestions. Groups of pupils including Young Leaders, the School Council, Religious Education Council and the Lunchtime Squad, contribute to the school's Catholic life. They take their responsibilities seriously, understanding that this is part of their vocation to serve others and to contribute to the harmonious and supportive atmosphere of the school as well as developing its strong Catholic identity.
- Pupils recognise the importance of caring for others on a wider level. They are active in fund raising for a number of charities, local, national and global. Examples include CAFOD and a local homeless charity 'Off the Fence'.

- Active involvement in parish and diocesan celebrations fosters pupils' understanding that they are part of the wider Catholic family. Examples include the Good Shepherd celebration, the Diocesan Golden Jubilee celebrations at the AMEX stadium and participating in Education Sunday in the parish. Parish links are good, with parishioners regularly invited to the school for masses and celebrations. Examples include school half-termly masses and the Grandparents' Day celebration. Information is shared in the parish newsletter. The school has identified further strengthening parish links as an area for development and this is in line with the views of parents as expressed in the school's parental questionnaire and in the questionnaire distributed as part of this inspection.
- The strong supportive nature of the school ensures every individual is encouraged and enabled to achieve their full potential academically and spiritually. All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well.

**The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because:**

- The mission statement is at the heart of the school and informs all policies and practice. It is reviewed annually so that all members of the school community know its importance and ensure it is reflected in school daily life.
- The attractive and beautifully kept learning environment reflects the school's Catholic identity. The 'Golden Rule' summarising the mission statement is clearly displayed. Displays in classrooms and communal areas celebrate liturgical and school events as well as themes in religious education. Well chosen artefacts and prayer spaces remind members of the school community of its Catholic traditions and inspire them to reflection and prayer. Examples are the mosaic cross in the entrance hall and the display in the hall 'Our Lady Full of Grace' linked clearly to the school's mission statement as well as celebrating Our Lady's month of May.
- There is a great sense of community in the school. Caring and supportive relationships underpin the drive for excellence in all aspects of school life. Effective induction and support offered to all staff ensure that they form a cohesive team committed to fulfilling and promoting the school's Catholic life. Staff are encouraged to note 'magic moments' and pupils are asked to contribute positive comments about their teachers, affirming the ministry and vocation of the staff.
- Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Education in Personal Relationships (EPR) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) programmes are well established in the school and follow the teachings of the Church. Pupils have benefited from the school's Protective Behaviours Programme, 'Feeling Good, Feeling Safe'. A learning mentor and the 'chillax zone' provide support for pupils as appropriate. School leaders also ensure that the pastoral needs of staff are a priority, with support provided for the staff team and individuals. Governor pastoral support, staff lunches and a focus on staff well being contribute to the cohesion of the staff team.
- The school links behaviour expectations directly to Gospel values. These are explored throughout the year in dedicated six week blocks which use assemblies, prayer spaces, home learning tasks and parent / carer support booklets to reinforce and illustrate the message. The school behaviour policy has Gospel values at its heart, encouraging personal responsibility as well as the principles of healing and reconciliation.

**How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because:**

- The school's leadership is wholeheartedly committed to the Church's mission in education and to ensuring provision of an inspiring, caring and supportive Catholic life reflecting the school's Catholic identity. Leaders are excellent role models, leading by example and supporting and empowering the staff team.
- The Catholic life of the school is a high priority for school leaders. The governing body is well informed and actively involved. Governors include the Catholic life of the school in school improvement planning and monitor progress accordingly.
- The school welcomes and includes parents into its Catholic life. It has recently focused on widening the range of ways parents can participate, showing an awareness of the needs of different parental groups and individuals. In addition to invitations to school masses and celebrations, parents have been offered tea and coffee mornings, parental workshops and informal drop-ins. Senior leaders are present at the gate every morning and parents who may have English as an additional language may be given information verbally, mindful of possible difficulties in accessing written information.
- Parents feel part of the school community and enjoy participating in its Catholic life. masses and class assemblies are well attended. Parental questionnaires distributed as part of this inspection were very positive in their view of the school as a Catholic community. This was in line with the findings of the school's very recent parental survey.
- Governors are conscientious in their monitoring role. Attendance at class assemblies, school masses and worship, governor days and discussions with staff mean they are well informed and able to fulfil their role of critical friend. They attend diocesan training, particularly the link religious education governor, who also serves on the school Religious Education Council.
- School self evaluation is accurate, comprehensive and strongly evidence based. It informs development planning, which has clear time scales and lines of responsibility. Governors have been closely involved in the Section 48 Self Evaluation document and monitor progress on the school improvement plan.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding because:**

- St Mary's provides a wide range of collective worship opportunities. Pupils value these and respond very positively. Opportunities include masses, liturgies, assemblies, meditation and class prayer.
- The act of collective worship observed as part of this inspection was a whole school assembly led by the headteacher. Pupils were attentive and respectful, recognising that this was a special time. They were able to use stillness for reflection and prayer. The assembly used resources, role play and interesting activities very effectively to engage pupils and stimulate thoughtful discussion. The theme of the assembly was skilfully woven throughout all elements, including a creative approach to the message to take out into their own lives. It was an excellent example of high quality provision. Pupils responded well and were active participants.
- Pupils are very much involved in planning and leading worship. They enjoy selecting resources from well equipped 'worship suitcases' and choose artefacts, music, prayers and readings with care. They are ever mindful of the scripture message and how they can present this creatively and imaginatively. Older pupils plan and deliver their weekly class worship whilst younger pupils are encouraged to develop their skills in contributing to worship including creating the focus and writing the prayers. During this inspection, pupils were observed writing their own prayers at lunchtime at the prayer station in the chillax room.
- Pupils have a deep sense of respect for other faiths and recognise the importance of respecting the beliefs and practices of others; also that some members of their school community are not from any faith background. All are included and are able to participate in their own way. A pupil said, "No one's better than anyone else. Everyone is welcome here and everyone's important." A display of treasured possessions brought in by pupils included items relating to other faiths.
- Pupils recognise the importance of prayer in their lives. They know that prayer can help them and others in need. They make good use of the opportunity to contribute prayer intentions. A pupil said, "You can rely on God and ask Him anything when you pray." They are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and also confident in composing and contributing their own prayers.

- The school environment offers a variety of opportunities to encourage prayer and reflection. These include prayer spaces in the 'chillax area', the Mary Garden and class prayer tables. At lunchtime, music is played in prayer spaces to enhance the spiritual atmosphere. Christian meditation takes place on a daily basis giving pupils the opportunity to use stillness and calm to develop their relationship with God. Meditation was observed in two classes as part of this inspection. Pupils appreciate this time of calm. One explained that she chose to sit with the palms of her hands facing upwards so that her prayer rose up to God and His love came down into her hands.
- Pupils enjoy prayer and worship in school and know that it is integral to school life and important to them on a personal level. They speak appreciatively and confidently about events on their own spiritual journey and events in their class spiritual journals. The school spiritual journals are exceptionally well presented and are a beautiful record of the class year.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding because:**

- A wealth of varied and inspiring worship and prayer opportunities are woven into the fabric of school life. Provision is of a high standard.
- Prayer is part of every school day. Pupils and staff start and end the day with prayer, staff and governors' meetings always include prayer and many attractive displays and prayer areas invite and inspire pupils, staff and visitors to prayer and reflection. A reflective thought for the week is displayed in the staffroom.
- Provision for collective worship includes regular masses, liturgies and assemblies. These are carefully planned to ensure they are high quality spiritual experiences for the school community.
- Worship in school has clear themes linked to Gospel values and the liturgical calendar, as well as celebrating school events. In addition it reflects events in the world, as appropriate.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its feasts and seasons and speak confidently of how these are celebrated in school.
- Parents are included in the school's provision of collective worship and prayer and speak appreciatively of this. They are invited to a range of events and celebrations. Good attendance and appreciative letters and emails indicate this is much valued. Newsletters include prayers written by staff or pupils. A parent wrote, "Our daughter likes to pray at home and has ownership of her faith that has developed during her short time at St Mary's."

**How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding because:**

- School leaders have a high degree of knowledge and expertise in planning and delivering high quality collective worship and are committed to a high standard of provision. Careful planning and good resourcing contribute to nurturing pupils' spiritual development and strengthening the school community.
- Modelling by school leaders and the provision of training, support and resources has built a competent and committed team of staff empowered to deliver quality provision. Training has included INSET led by the headteacher to develop staff expertise in collective worship. This included preparation of resources and exemplar planning. This increased staff confidence and subsequent monitoring validated the effects of this.
- Parents are kept informed through newsletters and the school website and are always warmly invited and welcomed.
- Regular monitoring and review include collective worship observations, pupil interviews, parent questionnaires and teacher voice. These feed into school self evaluation and inform development planning. If support is indicated or requested, it is provided by school leaders or school practitioners with outstanding practice.
- Governors, in particular the link governor for religious education, are fully and actively involved in monitoring the school's collective worship and prayer life. They are frequent visitors to the school and participate in school liturgies and celebrations. Governing body minutes show they discuss and evaluate the spiritual growth of the school and consider it a priority. The foundation governors are active members of their parish communities, reinforcing school and parish links.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding because:**

- Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and appreciate its importance to their daily lives. They show excellent knowledge and understanding and a high standard of religious literacy across all year groups. Pupils particularly enjoy the varied activities and cross curricular links that enhance the teaching and learning of religious education, including drama, art and music. A pupil said, "I like religious education lessons because they are fun and you learn about Jesus and how to be like Him." The Religious Education Council members said they enjoyed choosing resources, "to make religious education lessons more fun." Other pupils commented, "The Religious Education Council does a great job! They've got us lots of lovely resources and made good suggestions."
- Pupils know that religious education lessons are a special time and that it is an important subject in their school. They are keen to do well and are proud of their religious education books, which are exceptionally well presented and reflect pupils' care and pride in their work. A pupil said, "It is important to me and my family for me to learn more about my religion."
- Behaviour for learning is excellent. In the lessons observed, pupils were attentive and interested and keen to give of their best.
- Standards in religious education are very good and in line with those in other core subjects. The great majority of pupils attain or exceed age related expectations, with a significant proportion working at greater depth by the end of Key Stage 2.
- All groups of pupils progress well in religious education. Pupils are appropriately supported and challenged.
- Pupils demonstrate good subject knowledge, talk confidently about their learning and are able to reflect upon what they have learned. They can relate the message of the lessons to their own lives and their behaviour in school and beyond.
- Pupils' work shows a high standard of presentation. The development of religious literacy is evident and shows progress across the year groups. Pupils demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and are able to draw on previous learning to support their contributions. An example was a Year 2 pupil, who quoted the words of Jesus on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," as an example of forgiveness.

## **The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding because:**

- School monitoring indicates that all lessons observed were good or better, with a significant proportion demonstrating outstanding features. This is in line with the findings of this inspection.
- Teaching and learning observed during this inspection was of a high standard. Four lessons were observed across three key stages. Lessons showed careful planning and a wealth of creative ideas. A range of teaching styles and strategies effectively engaged and enthused learners. Lessons built on previous learning, incorporated skilful questioning and provided evidence of progress within the lesson.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have high expectations of their pupils, who respond well.
- The teaching of religious education is enhanced by the effective use of cross curricular links, particularly music, art, drama and technology. An example was pupils presenting a video in which they acted out the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which they used to illustrate the sacrament to other pupils in the class who were not Catholics.
- Inspectors saw clear evidence of a range of activities to provide appropriate levels of challenge and support for all pupils. Other adults in the classroom provided effective and sensitive support for pupils with special needs, enabling them to participate fully in the lesson. The school may now wish to consider breaking down activities in more detail to ensure maximum accessibility.
- Marking is regular, affirmative and developmental. It shows a productive dialogue between teacher and pupil, with clear suggestions to help pupils explore and extend their learning. Pupils respond well to this, recognising that this helps them to achieve the next stage in their learning.
- Pupils are familiar with self assessment and regularly assess their own work against the appropriate success criteria. The school may now wish to extend this to include peer assessment.
- Assessment of pupils' work in religious education takes place half-termly. Data analysis enables the school to track pupil progress and identify pupils in need of support. All classes have a teaching assistant available to support these pupils.
- The school attends moderation meetings for religious education coordinators at deanery and diocesan level in order to ensure accuracy of assessment and validate teachers' judgments.
- Due to the transition from levels to age related expectations, assessment systems in religious education have undergone considerable change. The school has managed this very effectively and is now working to further develop its current system. The school is on the diocesan working party for assessment in religious education, reflecting its good practice and desire to maximise effective assessment procedures to facilitate the change from levels of attainment to age related expectations. This inspection agrees with the school that this is an area for continued development.

## **How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding because:**

- The school uses the 'Come and See' programme of religious education, enriched by cross curricular links. Curriculum time allocated to religious education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Religious education is well resourced and receives an appropriate budget allocation.
- Leadership and management of religious education is excellent. High standards of teaching and learning, together with effective systems of assessment and pupil tracking have led to high standards of attainment. The subject leader and headteacher are dedicated and inspirational role models for staff and pupils alike. They lead by example and are passionate regarding driving excellence in all aspects of religious education.
- A comprehensive system of monitoring is implemented and evaluated by the religious education subject leader, the headteacher, governors, Religious Education Council members and the teaching team. This focuses on key areas for development taken from the religious education action plan. It reflects the very commendable strategic direction planning and the school's constant drive towards further improvement.
- School self evaluation is accurate and reflective and makes excellent use of monitoring data and varied sources of evidence to plan targeted school improvement. The school is particularly commended for its comprehensive consideration of the views and suggestions of all stakeholders.
- Religious education is very ably led by the subject leader, supported by the headteacher and the link governor. There is a high level of expertise and a clear focus on achieving high standards in teaching and learning across the school. Best practice and training is shared with colleagues to create a skilled, enthusiastic and confident team.
- Governors consider religious education to be a high priority in the school. They have a clear idea of provision and standards. They take part in monitoring and evaluation and visit the school frequently. They receive regular reports from the headteacher, subject leader and link governor and are confident in their role of support and challenge. The link governor for religious education is committed and conscientious in her role. She makes a significant contribution to religious education in the school, liaising with the subject leader on a regular basis and contributing to school self evaluation and the religious education action plan. She provides a strong link to the parish where she leads the First Holy Communion preparation classes. An annual First Holy Communion Mass is celebrated in school and is attended by parishioners and parents as well as the school community.
- The study of other faiths is well established in the school and is evident in attractive displays such as the Hinduism display in the chillax room. The school celebrates its diversity by inviting visitors and parents into school to talk about their faith and cultures and by social events such as cultural food evenings.
- Parents are kept well informed regarding the religious education curriculum and any events or celebrations in weekly newsletters and on the school website.
- Areas for development identified by the last inspection have been fully addressed.

## Summary of Inspection Judgements

**How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.**

**1**

### **Catholic Life**

**1**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

**1**

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

**1**

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

**1**

### **Collective Worship and Prayer Life**

**1**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

**1**

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

**1**

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

**1**

### **Religious Education**

**1**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

**1**

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

**1**

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

**1**

